

tion a person who is neither the one nor the other, is so important a guide in practice, both as regards the welfare of the public and the status of the profession, that I for one cannot but regard the statement by distinguished physicians in Dublin, that it is customary for physicians to meet in consultation unqualified and unregistered practitioners, senior students, or apothecaries' assistants, with unqualified alarm. I repudiate the idea that physicians constitute themselves detectives by watching over the honour and dignity of the profession; and I not only see no harm, but I regard it as a duty when called to meet a gentleman in consultation, to ascertain, by reference to the *Medical Directory*, what his qualifications are.

I am, however, disposed to regard both the letters to which I refer in to-day's issue of the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* as the result of temporary irritation; for I cannot believe the evil to be as widespread as is there implied. At all events, I protest strongly against the imputation if applied to English physicians, for it has not come to my knowledge that such things are done in England, and I can scarcely have been in London practice for twenty-three years without having met with cases of the kind.

I thank you for having temperately and very properly ventilated the subject, upon which I cannot understand how there can be any difference of opinion.

I am, etc., A CONSULTING PHYSICIAN.

BABY-FARMING.

SIR,—My medical attendant, Dr. Brett of Watford, has just brought the interesting letter upon baby-farming in your paper of the 27th May to my notice; and as it touches upon a subject which has been engrossing my attention for several years, I write to express my gratification that "wet-nurse baby-farming" should be now receiving from your valuable paper the consideration of which it is well worthy. In consequence of the great want of a respectable home for the infants of wet-nurses having been long felt, where the infants could be carefully and skilfully brought up by hand, I have, in conjunction with several other ladies, recently set up such a home at a short distance from London in the neighbourhood of Watford, which promises well to combine these advantages. It is proposed that the infants should be received there upon a weekly payment of five shillings, and provided with two suits of clothes, which the mothers will be expected to renew during the period of their service. In case any of your readers should wish to take advantage of this institution, I beg to inform you that it is called Hill Farm Home, Leavesden, near Watford, Hertfordshire. The nearest railway station (distant one and a half mile) is King's Langley Station. Applications for admission should be made to the Matron, Mrs. Stacey.

I am, etc.

Grove Mill House, Watford, June 14th, 1871. JANE TAYLOR.

* * * The utmost care will be needed to prevent this, like other homes for the reception of infants, from becoming a charnel-house. We wish Lady Jane Taylor all the success which her excellent efforts deserve; but, if this home be anything else than a temporary receiving house, whence the infants are distributed into cottages, it will be by no means an unmixed boon. In establishing homes for infants, the best intentions may easily produce the worst effects. The practice of wet-nursing should be discouraged to the utmost; and the infants of wet-nurses should never be received into the institution.

THE CLUB MOVEMENT.

SIR,—It is to be regretted that Mr. Manley, in his letter to the *JOURNAL*, did not limit the want of success of the club-movement to the immediate locality of his residence, which he probably intended to do, rather than proclaim the failure of the movement generally—an impression which his remarks would convey to the mind of the profession at a distance. That his own unfortunate experience differs widely from that of other members of the profession at no great distance from West Bromwich, the letter of Dr. Fred. Turton sufficiently proves.

To prevent misconception on the subject, and, what is of more importance, discouragement in those members of the profession who have not yet attempted to obtain a more adequate remuneration for club services, I will briefly state the result of the movement as it affects my partner and myself, promising at an early date to give, as far as possible, its result with reference to the town generally. At the beginning of the agitation, we applied for increased remuneration to thirty-four societies, which were then paying three shillings per member per annum. The application, which was at once a demand for increased payment and a resignation in case of refusal, was met by eighteen societies with an increase to four shillings, by seven others with an increase to five shillings; and as a result of the application, a club paying ten shillings per member was shortly formed by members of various societies hold-

ing a much higher opinion of club services than that generally entertained. These enlightened individuals were probably born before their time. Nine societies only resisted the demand: these applied to surgeons who had not joined the movement, and were at once accepted at the original rates. One club which raised its rate to four shillings, after making several payments, retraced its steps, and was accepted by a surgeon who was satisfied with the three shilling payment; the others show no desire to return to the former tariff, but are well satisfied with the change. This is the more satisfactory, as all those societies now paying us four shillings are expecting, sooner or later, to receive a demand for five shillings—the sum fixed by the Friendly Societies' Committee; and on these conditions only are they held.

To sum up, then, less than two years and a half ago we held thirty-four societies, paying three shillings. We now hold twenty-three—seventeen at four shillings, five at five shillings, and one at ten shillings. The total sum paid by these twenty-three clubs is an advance of 50 per cent. on that previously paid by the same number. But this is by no means the most satisfactory change. The improved morale of club-patients is marvellous. Attentions that formerly they seemed to consider they had a right to demand, as something well paid for, are now received in a spirit of obligations conferred, with gratitude and thanks. In fact, the relations of doctor and club-patient under the new arrangement are, quite apart from increased remuneration, on a so much more satisfactory and agreeable footing, that it is difficult to understand why medical men can be found opposing both their own interest and that of their clubs by insisting to maintain the old state of things. The partial success of the movement is attributable to various causes which I shall not at present attempt to discuss, but the word failure cannot be fairly applied to it here; and, however far the present aspect of the question may be from that complete success which a few of the most sanguine among us anticipated, the words of Dr. Turton are as applicable to Birmingham as to Wolverhampton: "Its effects upon club-practice have been most beneficial, morally and pecuniarily."

I am, etc., ROBERT MACPHERSON,

Honorary Secretary of Friendly Societies' Committee.

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me, as a club-member who has always taken the deepest interest in the question of remuneration to medical officers from the commencement of the agitation, to say that Mr. Manley's remarks, in his letter which appeared in your issue of the 10th instant, do not apply to Birmingham, for here can be found some "trace" of the "good" in favour of the members of a society, as the result of the recent agitation by the surgeons? I say this, because I am writing from a member's point of view.

The society to which I belong numbers over two hundred members, and about two years ago it had under consideration an application for an increase in the remuneration to its medical officer. The question was fairly considered, and the members unanimously agreed to advance the pay from three shillings per member *per annum* to five shillings, and to raise the contribution one penny per fortnight. The change has worked well, and has given the greatest satisfaction to the members; and it would take no small amount of persuasion to induce them to go back to the old rate, although there would be no difficulty in finding surgeons to accept it. I am quite sure, from long experience in the working of sick benefit societies, that inadequate remuneration to the medical officers is a most grievous and fatal error.

Birmingham, June 20th, 1870. I am, etc., W. GRIMES.

SIR,—Having taken an active part in this movement from its commencement, I should be obliged by your allowing me a small space in your next issue to record my experience in order to correct the erroneous impression which Mr. Manley's letter has a tendency to create.

I may premise by stating that I live in a manufacturing district, and have attended a large number of clubs for the last twenty-six years. At the time of the agitation, about one-third of my clubs seceded rather than pay the increased rate. Since then, some have repented and returned to their allegiance at the advance, and others I would not have back at any price. New clubs have been formed, and many of the more respectable members of the lost clubs have become private patients. The results are: a pecuniary gain, less work, increased self-respect, and greater deference on the part of the club-members, and more value accredited for that attendance which costs them more.

To give the different causes of the failure of the movement in some instances in this district, would take up too much space. I will merely mention two as suggestive—want of unanimity amongst ourselves, and being too arbitrary. Some of the clubs have a demand served upon them for an immediate increase without due notice, and accompanied with stringent regulations that the money must be sent to the respective surgeons, and no discount allowed or gratuity of any kind to the